

INTRODUCTION

The United States Congress is the lawmaking branch of the federal government. It is a bicameral (two-house) legislature, consisting of the 100-member senate and the 435-member house of representatives. Each state has 2 senators who are elected statewide and serve 6-year terms. A senator must be at least 30 years of age, a citizen of the United States for at least 9 years, and a resident of the state from which he or she is elected.

The number of members a state has in the house of representatives is determined according to population. A house member, who serves a 2-year term, must be at least 25 years of age, a citizen of the United States for at least 7 years, and a resident of the state from which he or she is elected. The house of representatives is reapportioned after each decennial census to accommodate shifts in population.

Michigan's 17-member congressional delegation consists of 2 senators, both of whom are elected on a statewide basis, and 15 members of the house of representatives who are elected from congressional districts last apportioned by Act 115 of the Public Acts of 2001, enacted on September 11, 2001. The average population of these house districts is 662,563. After reaching a peak representation of 19 members in the house during the 1960s, the state's delegation lost one house seat after the 1980 census, two more house seats after the 1990 census, and one more house seat after the 2000 census, reducing the number of Michigan seats in the house of representatives to 15.

